

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHDM #0772/01 2110616
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 300616Z JUL 07
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3938
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6988
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4673
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3334
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7807
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1904
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5231
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1438
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7548

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 000772

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Lebanon, Peace Process, Palestinian Territories, Iraq,
Syria/China (7/27-29)

¶1. Summary: All Syrian papers on July 29 featured Hizbollah leader Sayed Hassan Nasrallah's speech on July 28 in mass rally in Bint Jbeil in south Lebanon commemorating the anniversary of the July 2006 war with Israel saying that the Lebanese resistance has foiled US plans for a new Middle East and warning that his party will continue to possess a large rocket arsenal to strike Israel again if Lebanon comes under attack. "This war aimed to impose a new Middle East, fragmented into ethnic mini-states, serving the interests of the United States and Israel," Nasrallah said. "There is no new Middle East; It is gone with the wind." Nasrallah charged that the July-August war was the result of "a US decision" and the United States provided Israel with "political and material support." Nasrallah said both Washington and Israel were counting their losses since the conflict, adding that Hizbollah will never be at peace with Israel.

Independent al-Watan on July 29 reported that Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said that his country fully supports the Arab Peace Initiative, describing it as "a good base" for an international peace conference, which the US has suggested to be held next fall. Moratinos is in a tour in the region and will visit Syria this week.

Al-Watan July 29 also reported that a conference on the health needs of Iraqis in neighboring countries is convening today in Damascus, and will last for two days. Minister of health in Syria, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, in addition to representatives from the UNDP and the UNICEF, will attend the meeting.

On Syrian-Chinese relations, government-owned Al-Thawran on July 27 reported that Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad's meeting on July 26 with Lihua Chen, the Chinese Ambassador in Damascus, reiterating Syria's support for the One-China principle which enjoys vast acceptance and backing in the world. Miqdad renewed Syria's rejection of attempts aiming at targeting this principle including a referendum that the Taiwan administration wants to make in order to join the UN. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations between both countries and means of enhancing them in all domains, as well as coordination and consultation between them in the UN. The Deputy Foreign Minister underlined Syria's commitment to resolution 2758 of 1971 adopted by the UN General Assembly which expressed the international community's recognition of one

legitimate government in China.

End of summary.

12. Selected Headlines:

"Hizbollah SecGen Nasrallah: We have foiled US plans for a new Middle East... Dreams of the governing team have begun to vanish" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 7/29)

"President Lahoud warns against settling Palestinian refugees. Former PM Karami warns against prolonging the crisis. MP Aoun: The confrontation with the governing team started after the marginalization of the presidency. Lebanese Ministers and MPs: The governing team is gambling on the US-Israeli project" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/28)

"French Foreign Minister Kouchner to the Lebanese: Either dialogue or war" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 7/29)

"Moratinos reiterates Spain's support for the Arab Peace Initiative; He is due in Damascus this week" (Independent al-Watan, 7/29)

"A European diplomatic source: Fateh al-Islam is affiliated with Al-Qaeda; Syria is a target of its operations" (Independent al-Watan, 7/29)

"Damascus hosts a conference on the health needs of Iraqi refugees" (Independent al-Watan, 7/29)

"Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov: No solution for any of the region's issues without Syria" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/28)

"Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad confers with Embassy of

China. Talks focus on enhancement of consultations and bilateral cooperation" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/27)

"Rice and Gates in the region to 'soothe' moderate 'Arabs'" (Independent al-Watan, 7/29)

"The United States and Canada vote against a resolution by the UN Social and Economic Council that calls for reviving the peace process on the basis of resolutions 242, and 338" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/28)

"Moscow asserts that Hamas is a substantive party in talks. President Abbas heads to Moscow to get clarification about its position" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/29)

"Olmert proposes an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank while keeping major settlements. 8% of Israelis support Olmert" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/28)

"Israel commits a new massacre in Gaza" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 7/27)

"61 Iraqis killed, 94 wounded in an explosion of al-Qarada. A Congressional committee calls for a timetable to withdraw US troops from Iraq" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/29)

"No political roadmap in Iraq. Nine US soldiers killed in Iraq within two days. An emergency US plan to withdraw US troops" (Government-owned Tishreen, 7/28)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Farcical Play and Failed Production"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (7/28): "US President George Bush's administration is trying to accomplish in a year and six months what it failed to accomplish in five years and six months. Will it succeed?"

"This administration is trying to put on the discussion table and in the circle of attention what it has ignored since its controversial arrival in the White House. We are talking about the peace process, specifically, a settlement or a deal to delude the public opinion into thinking that a victory was achieved on the peace front, since defeats are what this administration has on the war front....

"The search for some victory prompted Bush and his senior administration officials to move in the Middle East arena in an attempt to conclude a deal between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; a deal that might be deposited in his empty account in the political bank.

"We have no doubt that the American policymakers are smart. But this smartness is incomplete because it assumes that the others are naive and can be deceived, which is not the case. Here lies the mistake in Washington's policies.

"This smartness turned Tony Blair into the peace envoy of the Quartet, which is exclusively owned by the US Administration, because Blair has been tested and has proved to be the best to implement the American orders in full....

"But Blair alone is not enough to score the desired accomplishment that would help Bush go down in history as a peacemaker, not as a man of war, terror, and destruction....

"Here is Miss Rice packing in a hurry, getting ready to come to us to give momentum to the American and international efforts to establish a temporary Palestinian mini-state without independence and sovereignty and only on a part of the West Bank. What a difficult puzzle!

"Blair and Rice are part of the scene and part of the moves. What is required is an American-European-Arab mobilization to produce the worst farcical play in the region's history.

"How can a team managed by masters of Zionists or Zionized people make a just peace without it being biased toward the Zionist plan and Israel?

"How can this team turn the losers and the defeated into victorious peace heroes?

"For an administration that has been skilled at lies and deception over six and a half years, this is very easy. The old weapon it used to invade and occupy Iraq and ignite fires in it can be used again. This is the weapon of lies....

"Today, people who should be referred to the war crimes court come to us to tell us about an Arab-international conference 'meeting' in the United States in September to normalize Arab relations with Israel, even before the signing of a worthless deal that gives a part of a Palestinian mini-state to part of the Palestinians....

"Bush might achieve some false victory, but it will remain false. He will not be able to mislead the world once again because he is not a man of peace and because he is the advocate of a colonialist plan based on the settlements. He and peace are diametrically opposed. The new play will miserably fail because its production is a failure and because it is a new lie by an administration that have taken up lies and charlatanism as a profession."

"How they abort Victories!"

Hanan Hamad, a commentator in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (7/28): "The Bush administration, which is unable to come out of the Iraqi quagmire and which lost many of its cards in Lebanon, is not really willing to achieve a genuine settlement between the Palestinians and Israelis....

"This administration, through its growing talk about peace and the

sending of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the region, is trying to score some achievement for President Bush, one that improves Olmert's image and strengthens the positions of those whom the administration calls 'Arab moderates', without offering Palestinians an effective and complete solution guaranteeing their inalienable rights as acknowledged by the international resolutions and the historical facts of the conflict.... The solution the United States is looking for is one that completely serves Israel's interests....

"It is painful that Arabs of 'moderation' are putting the eggs of the victories of the resistance in Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq in the basket of the American-Israeli plan that seeks to thwart these victories."

"A Danger Signal"

Ahmad Hamadah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/27): "The US Administration secretly pledged to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to increase US aid to the Israeli military budget to \$3 billion annually....

"Contrary to their claims that they seek to achieve peace, security, and stability in the region, the United States and Israel are planning war strategies for years to come....

"What peace is Israel calling for amid such policies that pave the way for further wars, destruction, and weapon stockpiles? And what

international conference is Bush calling for to launch the Arab-Israeli negotiations in the fall if he is planning to almost double the military assistance to Tel Aviv over the coming years...?

"These are the strategies of war and aggression that the world has known well. It is obviously difficult for a racist usurper entity and a blind US Administration that sees solutions only through wars and aggression, to abandon these strategies...."

"Policy of Lies"

Mundhir Khalil Id, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (7/27): "Another lie by the Bush warning is that an American withdrawal from Iraq would enable Al-Qa'ida and Islamic extremists to control the Middle East, try to obtain nuclear weapons, and plan and finance new attacks on the United States....

"The world now knows the truth about Bush and the threat he poses to the world security and peace through his reckless policy. During Bush's reign, the world has seen nothing but death, destruction, blood, and chaos. It is high time Bush realized that lies do not build the glory of countries or individuals and that he ought to acknowledge defeat...."

Corbin